1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
FE11 Tailensi FE11

513 178 bone of the old Native Administration, to be superseded and pushed aside by ambitious and often unscrupulous upstarts who bid for these minor posts before the Chief in whose patronage they lie; the almost inevitable result is that, having obtained the office, they are induced to regard it chiefly as a means of enabling them to recoup themselves for the expenses which they have incurred in securing the post.

342 *The Family Compounds*: These are round, flat-roofed, scattered, and, as far as I could see, in other respects similar to those already described. 1/1

793 *The Ten'dan'*: Among the Talense an investigation into the former status and rights of this official resulted in the confirmation of the answers already given to similar enquiries made elsewhere. 1/1 The following notes may therefore be regarded as supplementary to what has previously been written concerning these individuals, and as being, for the main part, applicable to *Ten'dama* in general, and not only among the Talense.

793 783 627 *Duties of Ten'dan'*: (*a*) He takes a certain part in funeral customs; this will be dealt with under that heading. (*b*) He purifies the land from defilement of blood. 'The Earth does not wish any one to die, except God's death (*Yin-ku*); *kun kpemere*, a violent death, is a taboo of the land (*tey*), so if any one fights and spills blood on the land, it has to be purified (*man tey*). The one who causes the wound has to bring a fowl and a goat, if a person was actually killed, and a cow for the Chief. The sacrifice is made at the compound of the *Ten'dan'*, not where the blood fell. I will assemble all my people and send to tell the Chief that I am purifying the land. If those who had shed the blood were from the Chief's compound, he will send representatives, not otherwise. If the guilty person refuses to purify the land, I will speak and he will die. Even if I do not speak, the land will fight him, that is, permit a snake to bite him or give him head-ache or belly-ache.'

Words Spoken at the Ceremony: 'I will call my father and say: "Listen, they fight on your land, and give head wounds, and blood comes forth. Blood flowed and wet you, so they have brought flour, fowls, and a goat to give you." When I have spoken thus, I make the sacrifice on a heap of soil which I scrape together.'

782 783 If any one raises the war cry *kah tagulk* (Nankane, *kasega*) without a cause, he must sacrifice to the land. If any one sells another person, he must purify the land, giving a cow or sheep. 'The land owns the people, that is why a sacrifice is made to her.'

Purification of the Land when Some One is Sold: When a person sells

1/1 [The sections of the source containing this material were not processed.--Analyst]

1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
FE11 Tallensi FE11

Purification of the land when some one is sold: When a person sells
567 a son or a brother, he may not tell the *Ten'dan'*, nor will the latter take
●783 any notice, but sooner or later some misfortune will befall the vendor,
793 or some of his family, and on consulting the *bay* (soothsayer) he will be
593 informed that his having sold some one is the cause; he will be advised to give a cow, sheep, or goat to the *Ten'dan'*. He will give the offering to the land, saying: 'My father, there was a famine, and some one sold his own son, and he has brought these things. Receive them and prevent headache and belly-ache, and give them to the land.'

769 I asked my informant why he used his father's spirit as an inter-
793 mediary. He replied, 'My ancestor knew the land before myself; all
783 our ancestors are in the ground, which is a *bagere'* (shrine).

Duties of the Ten'dan' in Connexion with the Making of a New Farm:
793 The man about to make a new farm will sacrifice to his ancestor through
782 the head of his compound. He will then take a fowl to the *kpasodan'*[1]
241 (the tenant of that land) who will give the offering to his ancestor.
427 This tenant had originally approached the *Ten'dan'* before acquiring the land, and the sub-tenant, therefore, apparently need not again do so. A *Ten'dan'*, on giving land to any one for the first time, will ask for fowls (not white ones), one for his father, one for the land. 'After sacrificing, I will conduct the man to the land, take a hoe, break the ground, and tell the man that he may begin cultivating. I show him the boundaries of his farm. I need not tell him that anything he finds on the land is mine; he knows that already. He knows, too, that if he ever refuses to allow any one to pass over his land, or if he is greedy about his crops, not giving some to those who are hungry, I have the power to drive him from the land.'

793 'The *Ten'dan'* makes the land good.' 'The *Ten'dan'* owns (or rather
425 owned, for in many places I found this ancient prerogative usurped by the Chiefs) all lost cows, sheep, goats, donkeys, fowls, iron, hoes, axes, and brass ornaments. A *Ten'dan'* is never succeeded by his brother
[292] or by his son. This hat [referring to the distinctive string hat worn by *Ten'dan'*] is not a rich thing. Any one in a section may become *Ten'dan'*.'

Again: 'When the Mampruse, under *Misore*, first came here, they captured a man near a well who said he was the *Ten'dan'* of Gbeo. Later on *Misore* found other *Ten'dam'* at Bare, Ka, and Kundugu. He did not kill them, but appointed them to sacrifice to the land and show him her *kyibir* (avoidances, Nankane *kyisiri*), and rights—avoidance of blood, right of *Ten'dan'* to lost property or anything found on the

[1] Nankane, *Kuwodana*.

1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
FE11 Tallensi FE11
NAMNAM

632 622 624 and intelligent man (see Fig. 79), informed me this was the constitution long before the Europeans came. 'A *Kambon-nab*', he said, 'is succeeded by any one who asks for the post, but if there are many applicants, the wishes of the people of the *teya* were taken into consideration.'

651 622 *Tribute*: The head Chief stated that he received yearly tribute of corn, ground-nuts, and beans, and that friends for whom he settled cases would 'thank him with a sheep'. He also received presents from the *teya* heads, whose appointment lay with him.

651 622 224 'When a beast is killed in hunting, the whole beast is given to the section-head of the hunter who killed it. He, in turn, sends a hind leg to the *Kambon-naba*, who sends it to the Chief, who shares it with the *Kambonnannam*.'

624 622 793 *Work of Section-heads: Ten'dan': The Territorial Ruler*: 'The section-heads settled adultery cases. If blood were shed on the land or any one was killed, or if rain did not fall, a cow or sheep or goat was given by the Chief to the *Ten'dan*' to sacrifice and purify the land. Now-a-days most Chiefs do not do so. Before you Europeans came, we Chiefs recognized the *Ten'dan*'. The reason others do not do so now is, that since Europeans came, many new Chiefs have been made, who know nothing about Chieftainship and only want to look after their own bellies. I myself have continued the old things. After the sowing we collect things and give to him (the *Ten'dan*') to sacrifice. I have not, like most Chiefs, taken away the *dawa dawa* trees from the *Ten'dan*'; when I am in need of some, I buy what I require. Formerly Chiefs ate out of calabashes, now they try to eat out of a basket.'

624 Heads of sections, of whom there are four at Nangoot (in charge of the sections known as *Zod'bis*, *Beam-bis*, *Isaka bis*, and *Kpea-bis*),[1] report to the *Kambon-naba*, who in turn report to the Chief.

622 The Chief of Nangode, with whom I was very much impressed, informed me that he had continued the old system of Native Administration, although 'few other Chiefs now do so, which causes the spirits in the groves to lament'.

793 [421] [783] *The Ten'dan*': The following was told me by the *Ten'dan*' of Nangode (see Fig. 80): 'My ancestor owned the land. I was head *Ten'dan*' (*Ten'dan' kpawm*). The Europeans have given power to the Chiefs, who now own the land. My ancestors owned *dawa dawa* trees, and lost beasts, and when men shot arrows and killed any one, a cow was given to purify the land. When some one wanted to build a new house,

[1] *Bis*—children, i.e. descendants.

1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
FE11 Tallensi FE11
NAMNAM

793 he would ask the *Ten'dan'* and be given a place to build, or a place to farm. After the harvest of the early millet, they would send millet to give "water" to the groves, and so too, after the corn harvest. If [783] blood came from any one, except from the nose, and fell upon the land, the *Ten'dan'* had to purify it. If Chiefs sold any man in exchange for [567] cattle, the *Ten'dan* was given one to give to the land, but when people were sold in a time of famine in exchange for food it was not customary to give anything, but the land would be angry and kill a member of that family who had sold their kinsman, even (extending its vengeance) to a member of their daughter's family who had married far away. [772] The land is a female and "above" is a male. When I sacrifice I call upon my father to "reach" his father who will "reach" the grove. Birth, crops, the getting of wives, good sleep, depend upon the land, [62] who tells *Wen* (God). When two people were about to fight, and the *Ten'dan'* went to stop them, he would lay down his staff between them and no man might shoot arrows over that. The staff is a corn stalk. Any one who disregarded that would die. *Tobeg'* and *taku*[1] have not anything to do with the *Ten'dan'*.

The Position of the Ten'dan' in Cases of Adultery, Theft, Murder, and Suicide.

684 *Adultery*: 'The head of the section settled such cases; it was not 624 formerly a Chief's concern.'

Theft: 'In case of theft, the thief, if caught, would be taken to 685 the one who "owned" (i.e. was responsible for) him, who would 624 settle the matter. If the parties could not agree, the matter was taken to the head of the section, who would take it if necessary to [77] the Chief. Since Europeans came we have the *Kambon-nab'*.'[2]

Murder: 'If a man from Nangoot was killed (murdered?) by a man 622 from (say) Pelino, and the slayer was caught, he would be killed by 793 those who chased him. Afterwards, the Pelino people would bring 628 cows, and the people of Nangoot also, and give to the Chief who would then give some to the *Ten'dan'*, keeping the remainder to purify his [783] skins. There is a hole below the skin on which a Chief sits for the blood to flow. The family who had had a member murdered did not receive anything. The Pelino people and the Nangoot people concerned would mix the flour and water which each will bring and make peace. Were the Pelino man, in such a case, to escape, and if the

[1] See Chapter XXVIII.

[2] According to the Chief, these officials were part of the old administration.

[1] [Nankanse concepts apply to persons who have directly and indirectly committed a murder — Analyst.]

1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920) 1932
FE11 Tallensi FE11
Kusase

351 In a corner beside this *wen bay* is another lightning protector, a
751 long stick with one end bent into a hoop, also a pot containing roots.
782 'When the rain does not fall, I sacrifice to it, saying, "God and the
342 land, I want to beg water, because corn, beans, and other grain are withering." When it does rain, the person who made the sacrifice has to stand here in the rain for some time and not go into the room. The bent stick is for tying the lightning. Before this sacrifice is made, and before the rain is called, the one who is about to do so, bathes with water in which the roots in the pot are soaked.' This particular *dog*, which is that of the senior wife, contained the following huts:

(*a*) A small hut for boys, sons of the *Yi-dan* called *bis dog* (boys' room).
(*b*) The hut of the senior wife of the *Yi-dan*.
(*c*) A kitchen (*daan*), *daana* in Nankane, unroofed, but behind it is another kitchen, roofed, used in the wet season.

342 Each *dog* is identical in construction; a sleeping-room, and a dry-
361 and wet-season kitchen surrounded by its own private yard. In the centre of all these women's quarters is a square hut, called *yi-dan-dog* where the head of the compound sleeps. Joined on to the above compound, but with a separate entrance, is another compound, a replica of the first. It is that of the eldest son of the *Yi-dan*. Among the Kusase, as among the Nankanse, an eldest son may 'go out', that is go away and build a new homestead some hundred yards or more from that of his father, or he may have his home adjoining that of his parent but with a separate entrance. The son in this case had done the
[778] latter. He possessed his own *Wen bay* (*Yini* in Nankane), not a large flat-topped circular shrine like his father's, but just a small earth mound. This son's compound contained three yards, each containing one living hut and two kitchens. He had a separate grain-store independently of his father. Among the Kusase these grain-stores are not inside, but outside the compounds, differing in this respect from the Nankanse.

778 The *zɔŋ* hut, already mentioned, also contained the 'medicine pot',
783 set by his slayer, for the spirit of a man who has been murdered or killed in war. This shrine, after the death of its original owner, will be kept in the *zɔŋ* hut (compare the Nankane *tobega*). The following is a description of this custom among the Kusase.

'When one man kills another, he has to get a *yur* (pot). This pot he will "set" and bathe with the medicine which it contains for

1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
FE11 Tallensi FE11
Kusase

three days. At the end of that time, he will bury the "roots" which the pot contains. Beer is then prepared and more roots sought for, and two pots. A dog and a red cock are sacrificed on one pot; a goat and a white cock on the other. Water, in which the roots have been soaked, is used for making *sagbo* (porridge) in which the livers of the sacrifice are put. The murderer and the head of his family first take some of this food in their left hands and put it in the pots, after which they and any one else who has ever killed a man (in war or otherwise) will partake of the rest of the food. Some of the roots are burned and then powdered and put in beer, and the head of the murderer's family (if he too has ever killed any one) and the murderer drink it. A similar sacrifice is made over these pots twice a year. When the murderer dies, the two pots are placed inside the *zɔŋ* hut, and the son of the murderer will continue to sacrifice on them, but unless he too has killed some one, he may not himself eat of these sacrifices. The following words are spoken when the sacrifice is being made:

'Medicine (*tim*) receive this offering and drive away that person (the murdered man) that he may return to his own compound.' The relations of the murderer have also to bring a goat, a cock, and beer to 'cover up the blood'. This is the work of the *Tenedan*'. He will make the sacrifice and say:

'Children have done something bad (*yele*) and blood has come forth and death resulted. Receive this offering and quench this fire.' The fowl and goat are sacrificed over a hole in the ground and the feathers of the fowl and undigested food in the stomach of the goat are buried in the hole. The whole of the sacrifice must be eaten at the spot where it is made. A child's bow and arrow is broken and placed in the same hole with the words, 'This is the bow and arrow which has caused the death; we have broken it; do not permit it to come out'.

'A man is very proud to have killed another in war, but not to have murdered one.'

1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
FE11 Tallensi FE11
Kusase

is prepared, and the eldest son will kill a sheep and make food for his father's spirit. "Next day is the *ku-dar*, but the spirit has still to get his bow and quiver. All the food he has been given, he will take to his father and then return for his bow and quiver." The spirit will make use of all these things. I sometimes dream I see my father driving the flocks before him', said my informant.

The date of the *ku-kweem* or dry funeral depends on food supplies. It may be held at once after the *ku-dar*, or a year, or even four years, later. 'The spirit must be patient about this.' A day having been settled for the *ku-kweem*, all those concerned are informed, and the day before the beer is finally ready, all the relatives, sisters and sisters' children, daughters and daughters' children, and mother's relations, assemble at the town of the deceased. New *pokor nwi* (widows' strings) are put round the waists of the widows and their heads are completely shaved. Sons-in-law will bring baskets of grain food and all the children of the deceased will also shave. Towards evening, the widows, who have not been taken by the heir, will choose new husbands, for they will have to leave the compound before the quiver is brought out. After shaving, widows are made to pass through the doorway of the main entrance to the compound. One who has been unchaste during the period of her widowhood will refuse to do so and will struggle. She will then confess the name of the adulterer. This man, when he sees he has been exposed, will run away to his in-laws and from there send a messenger to the Elders of his section begging their forgiveness. He will be told to bring a large fowl and a pot of beer to purify the land. A hole will be dug in the ground, the *Tenedan*' will come and sacrifice the fowl, saying: 'Land, receive this beer, for children have sinned—a matter of a vagina—may the offence be buried'. As he says so he fills in the hole. A male relative of the adulterer and one representing the woman, sit beside the hole. They each put their mouth to the calabash of beer and drink some. A leaf has been put in the beer to represent the leaves worn by women. One man crosses his leg over the other, to symbolize sexual intercourse. The dregs of the beer and the leaf are buried in the hole. The fowl is also killed and its blood allowed to drip in the hole, into which its feathers are also put. The fowl is roasted and eaten, but not by him who brought it. The head of the compound to which the adulteress belongs, sends a fowl to the head of her section with the guilty woman. He sacrifices the fowl on his *yab bagr* (ancestral shrine) saying: 'A woman went out from her compound and they have got to bring her back, must you

1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920) 1932
FE11 Tallensi FE11
Kusase

837 allow her to return.' He cuts the fowl's throat and lets the blood
783 drop on the shrine, and next holds the fluttering chicken against the
765 woman's waist-strings which he cuts through. The woman then runs off to the house of the senior wife of the section-head, followed by a man with a whip; 'if he likes her, he will not flog her too severely'. There she is given new waist-strings.

765 The next morning, after 'the going out of the widows', one arrow
768 out of the quiver of the deceased is given to each surviving brother. The remainder, with the quiver, are then given to the deceased's eldest son, who will divide them between his brothers and himself. If the deceased had two bows, one of these will be given to a male friend of the dead man, with whom he used to hunt. The second bow is taken to the cross-roads and cut in pieces by the heir. The leather of the quiver is stripped off, cut in pieces, and thrown away. 'The funeral custom is now ended' (*kur naya*).

764 *Funeral Custom of a Clanswoman who dies in her Husband's Town*: 'If
602 my daughter falls ill, her husband will report to me or to her mother, and one of my wives will go there and stay with her. If there is not a good doctor in her town, her husband will ask me to send one. If she dies, a message is sent to me at once, when my brothers, their wives, my sons and daughter, and others from my section, will set off at once and go to her town. I do not go myself, that is forbidden, my younger brother, however, will go. They will bring back the calabash which contains the water with which the corpse was bathed. If her husband's people are few, her "brothers" will help in bathing the body, and if my daughter has not any sons-in-law to help in digging the grave, my sons, her brothers, will also assist to do so. When the body has been bathed, it is removed to the *zɔŋ* hut and rubbed with shea butter and the head shaved,[1] and *biug* fibre is passed between the legs. My younger brother will then take three stalks of *mwi* (rice) and brush one across her arms and say: "When you were alive, you had our taboos (*kyisug*); this you have to carry back to our fathers". He brushes the rest of the stalks down the right side, the left side, her breasts, and last of all, the back, repeating these words each time. These stalks are then placed on the calabash which contains the water in which she was bathed. The corpse is then carried out through the door of the *zɔŋ* hut and "shown" the compound four times—they do not trouble to

[302 171] [1] That of male corpse is also shaved. When a man's wife dies, the husband and children shave at the *ku-kweem* funeral, and when a man dies, the widows and children shave their heads. The same custom prevails among the Nankanse.

1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
FE11 Tallensi FE11
Kusase

and these are left on the grave. The iron heads of the hoes are washed in water containing *grunyoa* grass (*nagwa* in Nankane, used to fumigate everything which has had contact with the dead). If the deceased had a *bakolog* (soothsaying shrine) it is fumigated with the grass.

Driving the Souls of the Living from Graves: 'Some *bayas* (sextons) can see souls (*sis*) in graves. When they do so, they will take a potsherd and put peppers and tobacco on it and set them on fire and place them in the open grave in order that the soul may be driven out.'

This exhausts the information which I obtained while living with the Kusase,[1] whom I found a charming and delightful people. I pass on in my next chapter to describe the Builsa, whom Europeans know better as the 'Kanjaga'.

[1] The Kusase do not circumcise, nor do their women practise incision, unless influenced by Mampruse connexions, e.g. at Bawku. They file the teeth. The women pierce the lower lip only.

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

182 721 lineal kin of both parties. One of the best-remembered fights of this kind broke out between Gorogo and Wakii in the very year that the British appeared on the scene of Tale life. It occurred in circumstances that made it a mystical calamity which these two clans are still expiating.

796 535 282 On the day that marks the climax of the *Gɔlib* Festival, all the Talis and thousands of non-Talis from the rest of the country congregate on the summit of the Tong Hills for a great ritual dance. It is in the main a dance of the men of the Hill Talis clans. They come up and dance in clan contingents, wearing festive garb and carrying their weapons. The tumult is indescribable. The throngs of spectators, men, women, and children, milling backwards and forwards, the rhythmic thud of stamping feet, the harsh lilt of the choruses pulsating against the babel of the crowd, the shimmer of sweating bodies and gaudy attire, the ritual officers in their finest skins and black caps, the swift, snake-like convolutions of the dancers, all this makes a scene of thrilling excitement. The taut bodies and tense expression of the dancers show that they are keyed up to the highest pitch of enthusiasm; and as they dance in separate clan contingents, an intense feeling of clan unity and pride is created in each group.

× 618 535 533 508 Each clan contingent accompanies its dancing with choruses for which new verses on topical themes are made every year. And the point of most of these songs is the superiority of that particular clan to all other people. There is a strong feeling of rivalry between the various clan contingents, which grows keener and keener as the day advances. The old men say that careful watch must always be kept lest any of the young men start fighting. For though there is a ritual truce on all forms of strife throughout Taleland during *Gɔlib*, passions are easily inflamed during the dances.

[728]

721 535 These were the circumstances in which the fight between Gorogo and Wakii took place. The two contingents were dancing near each other. The Gorogo men sang, defiantly, '(We are like) the adder, woo! If others wish to, let them tread on its tail and see'. The Wakii contingent flung back '(We are) a beehive, woo! If others wish to, let them touch us and see'. The dancing became more furious and the two groups drew nearer and nearer each other. And then, suddenly, they clashed. In the mêlée several men were killed and many wounded before the tendaanas and men of other clans could separate them.

688 682 783 Bloodshed during *Gɔlib* is a dreadful sacrilege; bloodshed on Tenzugu on the day of the most important ceremonies and during the dancing is a religious enormity that cannot be compared to anything else in the Tale calendar of sins. The people of Gorogo and Wakii atoned for their sacrilege by the sacrifice of many cattle and sheep to the Earth, but they have not yet freed themselves of its consequences. The Earth still exacts the toll of death after death from the sons and grandsons of the original sinners. No reprisals were taken by either clan and their relations with each other were not affected by this fight.

578 Such fights could not develop into general wars because they took place between clans that are closely linked together by ties of clanship or ritual collaboration, or are connected through an intercalary unit that

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

his quarrel with the chief of his clan. The diviner added that the ancestors demanded that Gbalɔg should be exhumed and re-buried at Tongo among his forefathers. This meant that Gbalɔg's sons should beg the Chief of Tongo's pardon and offer expiatory sacrifices to the clan ancestors. But Gbalɔg's second son, who had lived with him, scornfully refused to do this, and added the further sin of withholding from his older brother Naŋgbeog, the legitimate heir, the property their father had left. There was scathing criticism of his behaviour at Tongo but nothing could be done about it. There are no jural sanctions compelling a man to abide by custom in cases of this kind; and as the Tallensi often say, men do not fear to defy even the ancestor spirits, when their property or power is at stake.

But shortly afterwards the second son suddenly became ill and died. At once everybody drew the obvious moral: he had incurred the wrath of the ancestors for his double sin. And when the cause of his death was sought by divination public opinion was confirmed. Naŋgbeog, now the recognized heir, at once got some elders to plead with the chief on his behalf and the curse was withdrawn. Naŋgbeog gave a young bull and several small stock to be sacrificed to the clan ancestors in expiation of his father's sin. Since representatives of all branches of the clan have to be present at such sacrifices, this was equivalent to a ritual reconciliation. Naŋgbeog then exhumed and re-buried the bodies of his father and brother at Tongo. He brought home the live-stock and personal effects he had inherited from his father as well as the widows and children of whom he was now the proper guardian. Gbalɔg's defection was thus erased and his line wholly reunited to the parent stem.

Lineage solidarity, which in its widest extent passes over into clan solidarity, has great practical utility for the natives. But this is not the source of its strength and binding force. Their roots lie in the moral premisses of Tale society; the ideas of right and duty, in the idiom of Tale culture, are the formative elements in the sentiment and the display of lineage solidarity. The starting-point is the fundamental moral axiom of Tale social organization, the axiom that kinship is binding in its own right.[1] And the supreme sanction of lineage solidarity is, as we have seen, the ancestor cult, which is, for the natives, the objective, cultural embodiment of the social conscience.

This is evident not only from the preceding analysis but from a consideration of the rights and restrictions associated with lineage membership. There is the whole complex of rights, obligations, and prohibitions centred in the wives of the lineage members. Underlying it is the identification of lineage members with one another in virtue of their common agnatic descent. The right to inherit a clansman's wife is the correlative of the prohibition against adultery with a clansman's wife. Both rules spring from the notion of the social equivalence of siblings and from the common interest of the clan in the children of the clan. These are not matters of collective property rights but of moral norms. This is clear from the sanction against adultery with a clansman's wife, the belief that the adulterer is mystically dangerous to the injured husband if the latter gets ill.

[1] This subject is fully discussed in *The Web of Kinship among the Tallensi.*

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

and watched over by his ancestors. If she or the child dies in childbirth the responsibility falls on her husband. A child should be born under its father's roof, literally into the lineage to which it comes as a profit (*yoor*) and a responsibility, and under the auspices of its patrilineal ancestors, the spiritual arbiters of its destiny, to whom it will later in life bring sacrifices. Its life will depend on these ancestors, one of whom will immediately demand to be made its spiritual guardian, charged with preserving its life (*mar u ŋɔvɔr*).

Not only should a child be born under its father's roof, but it should, ideally, be reared, or at least be brought through the first dangerous months of infancy, in its father's house. Circumstances occasionally compel a child to be entrusted to the care of its mother's family, and the Tallensi are practical enough to accept this necessity with equanimity. But they are extremely reluctant to let a young infant pass out of the direct tutelage of its paternal kin and ancestors even for a short while. Thus strong objection is raised if a young wife takes her infant and goes to stay at her parents' house for some time. Here, again, practical necessity may leave no alternative, but there is always a feeling of uneasiness, as can be seen from the following case. When Nindɔyat of Zubiuŋ died, his youngest wife went home to her father's house at Tɔŋ-Seug, about a quarter of a mile from her late husband's house, taking her infant of some six months with her. Nindɔyat's brother and prospective heir tried to prevent her going, but she was not well, and they had to admit that she would be better cared for by her mother than by her co-wives. So they allowed her to go. A couple of weeks later, however, the baby fell ill, and though the young mother was staying only a few minutes' walk from her late husband's house, she returned to it immediately. 'She came running back home', her late husband's brother told me, 'because the child was ill. Its (dead) father had not agreed for it to be taken away (that is, the dead father, now a spirit, had mystically caused the child's illness as a sign of his displeasure). And supposing the child were to die at its maternal uncle's house? Should we not say that they had caused the death of our child?' The proper ritual measures to cure the child, without which practical leechcraft could not avail, could only be taken by its father or his representative in its father's house. The young mother believed this as firmly as her late husband's heir.

For all these reasons it is a taboo (*kihɔr*) for a child to be born in its mother's father's house. His ancestor spirits cannot watch over mother and child, for they do not 'own (*so*)' the child. It is, therefore, dangerous for the child's health and chances of survival. Of course, such a thing may, and sometimes does happen by accident. Then the child's father must, whenever he can afford it, erase the pollution by the ceremony of 'removing the blood (*vaa ziem*)' of the birth from his father-in-law's house. He sends a sheep and beer to his father-in-law as a placation

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

gift. Accepting the gift, the old man calls on his ancestors to bless his son-in-law and to forgive the offence. The beer is drunk by the elders of the father-in-law's clan segment. This ceremony should be performed before the child is old enough to visit its maternal grandparents. For if the child visits its mother's father's house before the pollution is erased and sets eyes—as inevitably it must—on the midden heap, where its placenta is buried, it will die. Instances are known of men who, defying convention and the ancestor spirits, have taken daughters from their husbands, owing to non-payment of bride-price, just before they were due to bear. Decent folk regard such behaviour as little short of monstrous, for it places mother and child in great danger, bereft as they are of the care and spiritual guardianship of the child's paternal kin and ancestors. It is for this reason, Tallensi say, that it is a taboo to demand a girl's bride-price while she is pregnant. Many a man wins a respite from his father-in-law's importunity on account of his wife's pregnancy.

The Significance of Maternal Parentage and the Uterine Line

The Tallensi, as we have seen, insist on the equal importance of both parents in the procreation of a child. Though patrilineal descent is overwhelmingly dominant in the jural, economic, and ritual constitution of Tale society, it would be surprising if maternal origin had no institutional function in Tale social organization and ideology. In fact, as has been shown in our analysis of the lineage system,[1] the two principles of patrilineal descent and maternal origin always work together. The two ideas are inseparable in native thought and run like a cry and its echo through the whole social structure. Whenever I have discussed these matters with informants they have generally begun by enumerating all the things that make 'paternal parentage (*ba dɔŋam*)' the most important fact of one's life, and have usually concluded by pointing out that, of course, 'maternal parentage (*ma dɔŋam*)' is also of the greatest importance, though in a different way.

One indication of the sociological significance of maternal origin is the quality of the bond between mother's brother (*ahɔb*) and sister's son (*ahɔŋ*), either of the first degree or in a classificatory sense.[2] A person's own maternal uncle and maternal grandfather (*yaab*), and their inner lineage (*dug*), impinge directly and frequently on his life. The maternal uncle's home is a person's second home. He has a quasi-filial status there; and in addition to close bonds of sentiment with his uncle and his uncle's close kin, he has specific ceremonial rights and duties in relation to them. Though he has no property, succession, or inheritance rights in his uncle's home, a man has special material privileges there, which give expression to the notion of his quasi-filial status. They show that he is equated with a son in sentiment while

[1] See *Dynamics of Clanship*, ch. iii.
[2] Cf. ch. xi, below.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

The idea of witchcraft is not
easily reconcilable with the structure of Tale society, dominated as it is by the patrilineal principle. As we know,[1] the residential unit is based on the agnatic lineage and the local community as a whole is based on lineage grouping. Most corporate and co-operative activities depend on lineage ties. The notion of maleficent secret malice involved in the idea of witchcraft is incompatible with the structure of the localized lineage. The occurrence of witchcraft within a lineage would poison the mutual confidenee of agnates, disrupt their corporate relationships, and so throw social life into confusion. As it is, the pegging of witchcraft to the uterine line serves to circumvent any danger it might be to the community. An accusation of witchcraft does not implicate the lineage. It is an individual matter, and other individuals on whom it might be expected to throw suspicion are scattered through various lineages and clans. They may protest, but they have no means of taking organized action in defence of their reputation. In any case, an accusation of witchcraft has a very limited range of reaction. Other lineages and families than those injured by the alleged witch do not feel the injury, and even if they harbour uterine kin of the accused person, self-interest prompts them to disregard the implications of the accusation. The folk-lore of witchcraft provides loopholes for such adaptations of logic to social realities. Some say, for example, that a person only becomes a bad witch if his or her mother gives him or her 'witch's medicine' to eat in infancy.

The hereditary transmission of the capacity of being a witch is not connected with the blood (*ziem*), according to Tale physiological ideas. Both parents transmit their blood to their offspring, as can be seen from the fact that children may resemble either parent in looks. It is solely a matter of the eye (*nif*, pl. *nini*)—not the physical eye but the inner, clairvoyant eye of the witch.

Uterine Kinship and the Notion of Tyuk

The social definition of uterine descent in terms of the notion of witchcraft is consistent with its functions in the structure of Tale society. The meaning of *soog* to the native is neatly symbolized in this notion. And this is true, also, of the only other attribute of social personality that is held to follow the uterine connexion. This is summed up in the concept of *tyuk*.

A person through whose words or actions fighting that leads to the slaying of a man or men is instigated bears a particular kind of mystical responsibility. The slaying of a man gives rise to a chain of mystical blood-guilt, and the person who bears the guilt of instigation may have been an unwitting agent and unaware of his guilt. Supposing, for example, I summon a man from another settlement to come and see me about something, and on his way home he meets a man to whom he owes a debt. Supposing the two men have an argument which ends in

[1] *Dynamics of Clanship*, ch. x.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

761
783

blows and my visitor gets killed by accident. Then the slayer will bear one kind of mystical blood-guilt and I will bear the *tyuk* guilt. I may not realize this; indeed, it may not be discovered until, on the occasion of my death, the diviner reveals that my ancestor spirits caused my death in retribution for my unpurged *tyuk* guilt. This was the case with Siiyɛlib of Tongo. When he died it was revealed through divination that he had borne the *tyuk* guilt for the punitive expedition against the Hill Talis twenty-five years previously. He had lodged a complaint against a Yinduuri man with the District Commissioner, and the white man's attempt to bring the Yinduuri man to book had led to the first brush with the Hill Talis. Other incidents followed, but the real reason why the white man launched a punitive attack on the Hill Talis a year or so later was because he had been enraged by the insults and defiance of the people of Yinduuri when he went to arrest the abductor of Siiyɛlib's wife and child. The test of historical accuracy would have been quite irrelevant in this context. Siiyɛlib's clansmen were interpreting the facts subjectively, in accordance with the native system of moral values and mystical beliefs, so as to fit his death logically to the morally and ritually significant events of his social biography.

A person who bears *tyuk* guilt must be ritually cleansed—'to wash *tyuk* (*su tyuk*)' is the technical expression—or else he and his family will be dogged by sickness, death, and other disasters. After the cleansing rites, the medicinal roots used are wrapped tightly in the skin of a species of civet cat (*tyuk*—hence the general term for this complex of ideas and actions) and the bundle is lashed securely to a rafter of the man's room. It must never be disturbed; if it is, quarrelling and fighting break out. A strong wind shaking the rafters of the room is enough to stir up strife. *Tyuk* once incurred remains a taint for ever; for it is really the evocation of a latent proclivity (so one must interpret the ideas of the natives on this subject) that goes with the uterine line. When a man undergoes the *tyuk* cleansing rites he summons all his *saarət* who are known to him to come and 'eat' the medicine with him, for this dangerous proclivity once evoked in one of them involves them all.

The concept of *tyuk* guilt and its connexion with the uterine line is less explicit than that of witchcraft. There is no idea of its being a potentiality transmitted by birth from mother to child. Even more than witchcraft it is a *post hoc* inference; but the natives do not explicitly attach a *propter hoc* interpretation to it. Uterine kin do not share their *soog*'s *tyuk* guilt; they are, as it were, mystically contaminated by it, by reason of their *soog* tie. As one informant put it, *tyuk* is 'contagious to (*de lɔŋɔra*)' *saarət* like a disease, or it 'kindles (*de ta'agɔra*)' *saarət* like a spreading fire. If a man has incurred and washed *tyuk* then the most trivial argument in which he happens to be involved is often in danger of becoming a real quarrel; and his *saarət* also become hot-tempered, or, perhaps, become prone to give vent to hot temper.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

It is analogous to the way in which a man's agnatic descendants become liable for his sins, though it is not so rigorous and consequential in action as the responsibility for sins and delicts that adheres to the male line. *Tyuk* is connected primarily with males; though it is of minor significance in the social definition of uterine kinship, compared with witchcraft, it obviously fits in with the principles of Tale social organization in the same way.[1]

Uterine Kinship as a Personal Bond

As we have observed, the fundamental distinction between uterine kinship and agnatic descent is that the former does not give rise to corporate units of social structure. *Soog* is essentially a personal bond, a bond of mutual interest and concern uniting individual to individual. Witchcraft, similarly, is an individual act of mystical aggression due to personal malice against an individual. The model of the relations between *saarət* is the affection, devotion, and strong feeling of mutual identification that prevails between parent and child or between full siblings of the same sex. Its keynote is mutual trust as between equals. It is never thought of as a matter of rights and duties but as a matter of sentiment, of spontaneous goodwill and intimate, personal confidence. Hence the term *soog* is often loosely used to refer to someone with whom one has a relationship of a similar sort, or to denote a very close relative of a class of relatives, whether or not they are true *saarət*. An intimate and trusted friend is like your *soog*, the Tallensi say. Two daughters of the same lineage, but of unrelated mothers, married into a single joint family feel themselves to be particularly closely related and identified with each other by contrast with their conjugal family, and thus speak of each other as 'my *soog*'. The children of two men who were uterine kin, keeping up the friendship of their fathers, talk of themselves as *saarət*. Two men of the same lineage, whether they are close or distant agnates, who have a common maternal uncle's lineage (*ahəb yiri*)—i.e. whose mothers' brothers belong to a single segment of a maximal lineage—feel a bond of personal kinship distinguishing their relationship with each other from their relationships with their co-members of the lineage. In contexts where they wish to emphasize their personal bonds in contrast to their common membership of the lineage they might describe each other as 'my *soog*'. And I once heard a man refer to his son-in-law as 'my *soog* son-in-law (*n-deem-soog*)'. This is a contradiction in terms, for marriage being prohibited between kin of any degree, a man cannot be both a son-in-law and a *soog*. But the speaker explained that he was using this term in order to distinguish

[1] There is an interesting psychological problem here, but it lies outside our present scope. *Tyuk* and witchcraft might be regarded as the male and female aspects, respectively, of deep-seated vindictive impulses connected with the mother.

3 Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

over its destinies just as they controlled its social and economic activities in their lifetime.

A new homestead is erected for preference on the site of a man's father's or other patrilineal ancestor's *daboog*. Such a site is consecrated through having been the scene of human residence in the past, and through the abiding association with it of the ancestors who formerly lived there. If a man builds on virgin land, the site must not only be technically prepared for habitation, it must also be ritually won for human ends. Hence the tendaana under whose ritual jurisdiction the spot falls must first consecrate it, and the new dwelling must be magically protected against those vague personifications of irrational maleficence, mystically dangerous stones (*kubeet*) and trees (*tebees*). So complete is the identification of the family with its dwelling, that if persistent misfortune dogs the family after its removal to a new homestead, and all other ritual measures seem to have failed, the onus is finally thrown on the homestead itself. 'The house has not accepted them (*yir la pu diebame*)', the diviners discover. The whole complex of mystical agencies which endow the house with its moral value for the family is against them.

In the single homestead, as in the settlement of which it is the elementary cell and the structural epitome, Tale social organization has three fundamental aspects—material, associational, and moral. They represent the three major kinds of interests and ends that govern Tale social life. And though all forms of social relations among the Tallensi always have these three classes of components, they do not always work in harmony with one another.

In the homestead, as in the settlement, social relations move in two planes: the plane of lineage relations, in which the canon of agnatic descent dominates corporate action and directs individual conduct, and the plane of domestic relations, in which the bonds of marriage and parenthood, and the bilateral ties of kinship in the narrowest sense, control the behaviour of people towards one another. The persons who form a unit in one plane fall into separate, opposed units in the other. Husband and wife belong to mutually exclusive lineages; brothers by the same father but different mothers belong to separate matricentral segments of the family and are nuclei of independent conjugal families.

The Ideas and Values embodied in the Homestead

It is far truer of the Talɔŋ than of the modern Englishman to say that his home is his castle, though not as literally as Cardinall imagines. The natives of these parts, he declares, build their homesteads solidly and a bow-shot apart in order the better to defend them against hostile neighbours.[1] This romantic explanation, however, has

[1] Cardinall, A. W., *Natives of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast*, pp. 2, 14.

3:Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

thus; and besides, people would say he was mean. This attitude does not occur with the true reciprocity that prevails in the domestic family or between near kin.

Sex in the Relationship of Affines

While, therefore, the relations of affines assume the existence of a formal distance between them, they are not encumbered by avoidances or other social barriers that make friendliness impossible or ordinary social intercourse a burden. There is amity as well as opposition in their relationship. In one matter only is there a rigorous barrier between affines. In respect to sex and procreation they are strictly separate. The emphasis is on the deed, not the word; there is no prohibition against talking to or in the presence of an affine about sexual matters.

One aspect of this ban on bringing sex into the relationship of affinity is the native attitude about a sexual offence against an affine. For a man to seduce the wife of an affine is almost as heinous a transgression as intercourse with the wife of a man of one's own expanded family, though it is not regarded as incest; and the offence is nearly as bad if the culprit is a close agnate of the woman's husband's affine or the woman the wife of a close agnate of the affine concerned. It is a grave offence, also, if a man or his close agnate abducts the wife of an affine or his close agnate. There are no explicit mystical sanctions against either of these wrongs, but Tallensi describe them as 'a thing of enormous evil (*yelbiog tenta'ar*)' bound to bring ill fortune on the wrongdoer, and in any case involving such serious social consequences that no man in his senses would descend to them. They think of the possible culprit as being the son-in-law, and they say that the father-in-law would take away his daughter and the bride-price be forfeited. Affines are bound to fall out with one another now and then. Usually apologies proffered through an intermediary lead to their making it up again. But in the case of a sexual offence against a father-in-law, it is quite impossible to beg or receive pardon. For it is a sin; it 'pollutes the room (*sayam dug*)' of the injured man.[1]

'Pollution of the room' in this sense is very rare among the Tallensi. But it is not unknown for a man to abduct the wife of the father- or brother-in-law (true or classificatory) of one of his own clansmen. The elders of both the abductor's medial lineage and the wronged husband's medial lineage are then extremely indignant. The latter demand the return of 'their' wife; and in all the cases I have come across the former see to it at once that the woman is sent back to her husband.

[1] Cf. p. 28 above. *Sayam dug* has the double sense of a mystical defilement of the sleeping-room—the inner sanctuary of family and of reproductive life—and of an irreparable infringement of lineage rights. If the offender is a distant clansman of the true son-in-law, a ritual reconciliation between the two lineages might be allowed after the defilement has been ritually removed.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

606 It is base to seduce an affine's wife, or the wife of his near clansman,
602 anywhere, but it is abominable to do it at the injured man's own house.
837 Strictly speaking, 'polluting the room' refers to the seduction of a father-
577 in-law's wife, or the wife of his close agnate, at his house or in his settlement. If a man's father-in-law or one of the latter's close agnates seduces the son-in-law's wife (of another clan than theirs), or the wife of one of his close agnates, it is generally treated as a particularly reprehensible form of adultery. The son-in-law would not, for example, necessarily divorce his wife on that account. A ritual reconciliation will be made and the matter closed. Tallensi say such offences are extremely rare, and I have never heard of a case.

835 The offence borders on a sin if it is committed by a son-in-law or
606 someone genealogically identified with him, on the one hand because of
837 his quasi-filial relationship with his father-in-law through his wife, and
577 on the other because of the sex barrier between affines. The striking thing is that it is a particularly heinous case of 'polluting the room' of a father-in-law for the son-in-law to have sexual relations with his own wife at her father's house. The bond which most closely unites a married couple is the relationship that cuts the woman off most completely from her filial relationship with her paternal family. As we have noted before, if her husband has sexual relations with her in her father's house her status as wife and mother is confounded with her status as sister and daughter; her husband's status as son-in-law is confounded with his status as father and husband in his own family. If the husband did not abrogate his marital rights at his wife's father's house, an insoluble conflict would arise both on the jural level and in their emotional relations. So strict is this taboo that it extends to any man of the son-in-law's lineage, and any daughter of the father-in-law's lineage, more particularly within the limits of the medial lineage. A man may not even meet
[576] his wife face to face on the path leading from her parental home to his, if she is on her way from her parents' house to her husband's; for this would symbolize a wish to treat her as his wife at her father's house.

●783 An accidental breach of this symbolic taboo can be mended, though
834 not without difficulty, by a ritual reconciliation. A breach of the prohibition against sexual relations between husband and wife at the latter's paternal home (and *yir*, home, in this context includes the whole settlement), or the equivalent offence committed by a close agnate of the husband, is irreparable. The marriage must be broken up, and children borne of it may be taken away by the woman's father. If this is not done, disaster would fall on everybody concerned. The bride-price is forfeited by the offending husband.

584 Opportunities and temptations to break these taboos often occur, for
574 instance when a young man takes a party of his clansmen to spend a few
834 days with his father-in-law in order to help him with some work. A man's wife generally accompanies him on such occasions. The visitors

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

expect not only to be well fed, but also to be well entertained. They expect their stay to be made pleasant by dancing, feasting, and flirtations with unmarried girls of the host's clan, and many marriages come about as the result of such contacts. Young men going on such parties are more likely to grouse at their treatment if there were not enough girls to flirt with than if they were stingily fed. But it would be a gross breach of hospitality, as well as an irreparable wrong, if any of the visitors seduced any of the girls; and the son-in-law and his wife always sleep in separate rooms.

These parties are extremely common. Towards the end of the dry season, when house-building is in progress, or in the latter half of the rainy season, when hoeing is very active, there are weeks during which a visiting party of in-laws can be found in a large settlement almost every day. Yet the sexual taboos we have mentioned are rarely broken. I was told of a few alleged cases that had occurred. But the only well-authenticated case I heard of was during my second visit to Taleland, when it came up in connexion with a court case over the woman who was concerned. The scorn and disgust with which people spoke of these cases showed how strongly the natives feel about these taboos.

The taboo against a woman's bearing her husband's child in her father's house links on to this complex of ideas. It is also a 'pollution of the room' of the father-in-law, and a very serious matter. For, as we have previously mentioned, it puts the child thus born into an anomalous position which is dangerous to his welfare. But a breach of it happens so often by accident that it does not inspire repugnance. The pollution can easily be removed by the husband's sending a placatory gift, as we have already recorded, to his father-in-law to 'clear away the blood (*vaa ziem*)' of the delivery. At the same time Tallensi do not like this to happen, and a woman near her term is not encouraged to visit her parents. I have known a man to be so angry with a wife who disobediently went to her father's house towards the end of her pregnancy and gave birth there that he refused at first to have her back.

A man also pollutes his father-in-law's room if he vomits (*ti*) in his father-in-law's house. It is unlucky. The son-in-law and his wife 'will not have it well (*ku nye sɔmma*) with them'; but amends can be made in the same way as for the birth of a child in the father-in-law's house. The symbolism is obscure and the natives cannot explain it. Vomiting is normally taken as a symptom of illness. It may be that they feel vomiting in such circumstances to be a sign of rejecting the hospitality of parents-in-law and therefore a sign of inner hostility to them. The context of this taboo suggests, however, that vomiting in a father-in-law's house is connected with the bearing of a child there, the symbolism being taken either from morning sickness or arising indirectly through the association of regurgitated food with the fluids discharged in childbirth.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

buried in one of the peripheral settlements, or abroad, where he has been living temporarily. Then, if his sons return to the ancestral home, perhaps years after his death, he will one day, through a diviner, order them to exhume (*gurəg*) him and rebury him among his ancestors at the ancestral home (*daboog*). The notion that when a person dies he joins his ancestors (or a woman her husband's ancestors as well as her own), and that his body should therefore lie among their bodies, is a basic idea in Tale religion and an obvious reflex of filial piety.

As the case of Sawəŋba's daughter, previously quoted (p. 89), shows, daughters are as much bound as sons to mourn the death of a parent. All the children of the deceased must come to the funeral so as to undergo the mourning rites. They are ritually unclean until they have done so and have had their heads ritually shaved (*kuo zug*) in sign of it. Though the ritual uncleanness (*dayət*) of a person who has lost a parent does not interfere with normal life, it is felt to be a psychological burden, for, as we have noted, until a dead person's funeral has been made, his or her social personality is not wholly erased from the real world. I have heard children of 10 or 11 say gravely that they wished their mother's or father's funeral could be made soon so that they could 'shave off the uncleanness (*kuo dayət la bah*)'. The uncleanness adheres primarily to the deceased's own children, but it also affects proxy children who have no living parent (as determined by the criteria of 'fatherlessness' or 'motherlessness') of the same sex as the deceased. One of the ways in which Tallensi demonstrate respect and affection for a classificatory parent such as a father's agnatic cousin or a classificatory father's wife, who has never been a proxy parent to them, is to undergo the chief mourning rites for him or her—provided, of course, the mourner is 'fatherless' or 'motherless' in that situation. When an old man or woman who was the last of the generation of 'fathers' or 'mothers' of the inner lineage dies, the men and women of the lineage to whom he or she is a classificatory parent gather from far and wide for the funeral and all undergo the rites of shaving the head. It is not compulsory for anyone to have the head shaved for a classificatory parent, but it is a pious gesture which at the same time proclaims the solidarity of the lineage. *De mortuis nil nisi bonum* might be a Tale proverb. Old grudges are forgotten—though not necessarily buried for ever—and men and women who have been estranged from their classificatory brothers and sisters or the deceased parent turn up to the funeral to do the proper thing.

Nowadays the death of a parent is one of the strongest sanctions that induce the men who go to work abroad to return home, if only for a while. The absentees may dawdle for weeks or months or even two or three years—for funeral ceremonies can be postponed, as we have noted, for periods up to three, four, or more years—but most of them come home eventually for the rites. Those who delay so long that their

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

the widow (or widower) during a funeral, or assist in the rites of purifying the widow or share her meals. Tallensi assert that a breach of this rule is impossible as no man or woman who had not had the experience would take charge of a widow. It is a taboo (*kihər*), and anyone who infringed it would die. Again, owners of diviners' shrines (*bakologo* shrines—the diviner is called *baya*) are identified in certain situations, though they do not form a corporate body of any sort. Thus when a new diviner's shrine is being set up for a man certain portions of the beer used in the rites can be drunk only by men who already have such shrines, and it is they who carry out the final rites by which the actual power of divination is conferred on him. Similarly it is only men who have themselves undergone the experience and the treatment who may assist in the ritual of purifying a homicide or a man who has slain a big game animal such as a bush cow. The list of illustrations could be extended, but this will suffice to show how deeply rooted the idea is. It is, however, only a determinant of individual conduct and sentiment, giving rise to *ad hoc* co-operation in certain situations, and not a principle of association in corporate units.

Factors modifying the Sibling Bond

The solidarity and social equivalence of siblings are conditioned by a number of factors. Differences of sex and, between like-sex siblings, of age are important. But distinctions of equal or even greater significance are imposed on siblings by the fundamental principles of the social structure. Siblingship does not cancel out the uniqueness of the individual, as symbolized in the notion of the *Yin*, and socially crystallized in the precise differentiation of the lineage segment which he or she founds. This factor, with its counterpart in the family structure and the economic organization of the household, is not important in childhood, but increases steadily in influence with the years. It is the basis of the fission between fraternal descent lines and, consequently, of the ramification of a lineage sprung from one progenitrix. How it works out, however, in a particular case depends upon the position of each person in terms of patrilineal descent and maternal origin. Thus the sibling relationship, while itself an important constitutive factor of the lineage structure, is reciprocally moulded by that structure. The relationship of brothers among the Tallensi might very well have been different from what it is if their social organization provided for the continuous merging of collateral lines of descent in lineal lines,[1] so that lineage branches springing from brothers were not specifically recognized, but only the inclusive trunk-line deriving from a distant ancestor.

[1] This appears to be the case with the Nuer at higher levels of lineage structure (cf. E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer*, Oxford, 1940, ch. v) and among some Southern Bantu tribes, such as the Zulu (cf. E. J. Krige, *The Social System of the Zulu*, 1936).

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

of the same inner lineage as 'our wife (*ti pɔɣa*)' or even as 'my wife (*m-pɔɣa*)'; and, reciprocally, a woman speaks of her husband's brother of the same inner lineage as 'my husband (*n-sɛt*)' or, preferably, as 'my husband's older (younger) brother (*n-sɛt-bier* or *n-sɛt-pit*)', but does not address him thus. The proper reciprocal term of address is *n-kpee* ('my neighbour'), or *n-dakii* ('my sibling-in-law'). The terms for husband and wife are used in address only between a man and a distant clan-brother's wife. 593 601 784

The penalty for breaking this taboo has both a literal and a figurative meaning, in the sense that the brothers will never share anything again or take part in corporate activities as co-members of the same lineage. It amounts to social and religious ostracism for the sinner, and Tallensi say he would not long survive or his line of descent would perish. A similar penalty is said to follow the killing of a brother, whether it happens by accident or design. As we know, incest with a brother's wife is said to occur, though extremely rarely; fratricide by a brother of the same inner lineage as the victim is felt to be so abhorrent as to be likely to happen only by accident in exceptional circumstances. It has happened once or twice in the past, informants say, when brothers fought over the division of farm-land, but I have not heard of any cases having occurred in the last thirty years or so.[1] 593 784 682

The strength of the sanction we are considering can be judged from its incidence, in an attenuated degree, in cases of intra-clan homicide where the parties are not brothers of the same inner lineage. If this happens, whether intentionally or by accident, the maxim 'A cow has trampled her calf to death (*naaf n-nɔ bu bii ku*)' applies—that is to say, it is as if a cow had trampled its calf to death; so it is forbidden, on pain of bringing down the wrath of the ancestors, for the victim's close agnates to 'cancel the debt' by killing one of the slayer's close agnates. This rule holds also for lineages or clans interlinked by clanship or ritual ties. The guilty party offers expiatory sacrifices to the Earth and then a ritual reconciliation is effected between the two units concerned. But thenceforth the close agnates of the slayer—members of his nuclear lineage, usually—will not participate in a sacrifice in which the close agnates of the victim take part. If the homicide was deliberate, this taboo will even extend to all the patrilineal descendants of the two men. Thus Wakii-Sagbarug yidem and Kuruugdem are adjacent maximal lineages linked by clanship and ritual ties. On certain occasions they meet to sacrifice together at an Earth shrine common to them. The Kuruug people refrain from attending these sacrifices if the chief officiant is a member of a particular segment of Sagbarug yiri. A Kuruug man told me the reason for this in confidence. Some four or five 593 682 784 [783]

[1] There is a legend that one of the early chiefs of Tongo slew his brother in order to get the chiefship. Tallensi say this was following the customs of the Mamprusi. Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, ch. iv.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

ritually 'pegged (*ba*')'—fastened to life, as it were—and is henceforth regarded as human. But whether either or both of the twins survive, the parents have to undergo a course of ritual purification after their birth. This is believed to act as a magical safeguard against the recurrence of such a misfortune besides cleansing them of the ill luck that has occurred.

In spite of this mystical background, twins that survive are regarded and treated as ordinary human beings. But there is one point on which very great stress is laid. Twins must be treated exactly alike by their parents. 'If you give one a portion of porridge you must give the other an equal portion; if you give one a penny you must give the other a penny', said one informant. If they are brothers, they will live together all their lives. If they are sisters they must be married to the same settlement[1] or to adjacent and interlinked settlements. For it is as if they are one person and yet are two. They are completely equal, completely equivalent siblings; and if they are not so treated, *ba ku nye ɔmma*, things will not turn out well for them.

Rights and duties become important in adulthood, when they are actively claimed and discharged; and it is in the social relations of adults that the equivalence of siblings becomes conspicuous. It is best exemplified in three institutions, the levirate, the rules of inheritance and succession, and the extension of patrilineal, matrilateral, and sororal kinship ties. We have dealt with various aspects of these subjects in preceding chapters. Brief recapitulation with reference to the present context is all that is needed here. The kinship aspect comes up again in the following chapter. But before we look again at the levirate and at the rules of inheritance, it is worth noting some of the minor indications of the equivalence of siblings.

There is, firstly, the idea that the bride-price received for a girl should be earmarked for the payment of the bride-price for the wife of her closest brother. This convention is not strictly upheld, for the deciding

artificial feeding is unknown to the Tallensi. During our stay among them two pairs of twins and a set of triplets (who are treated in exactly the same way as twins) were born to people known personally to my wife and me. Even to a layman's eye it was obvious that the triplets were doomed from the first, both because they were so puny and because the mother was so utterly exhausted. Of the two pairs of twins, only one child survived the first few weeks of life, and this child, when last heard of, did not seem to have a very good chance of reaching childhood. I do not know what the incidence of twin births is among the Tallensi. The best-known owner of twin medicine at Tongo told me he had had five cases during the past two years or so and of these only one child was still alive. I knew only one pair of living twins, aged about 7 or 8, among all the children—easily running into three figures—whom my wife and I got to know throughout Taleland. Single survivors of twins are more common and I knew four. Thus the native view of the high mortality of twins appears to be justified by the facts.

[1] They are, of course, not a pair of successive sisters, so the concept of *nyeer* (*v. supra*, p. 253) does not apply.

5: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937)1938 FE11 Tallensi FE11

telling me one day about his dead mother. 'I want them to complete her funeral', he said at length, sadly, 'so that I can have my head shaved' (a ritual obligation). 'Why?' I asked. 'Well, is it not my mother?' he said. 'If I don't have my head shaved it is dirt' (ritual uncleanness).

This is typical also of the moral attitudes to the living, to parents and siblings, engendered in the normal course of family life. That is how children learn to be obedient, considerate of others, ready to co-operate, careful of household property, and so forth.

It is evident from the above examples that adjustment to authority and adjustment to equals act together in the child's acquisition of moral observances. But my observations have led me to conclude that authority is effective from an earlier age than the pressure of opinion from equals. From earliest infancy commands, accompanied by acts or gestures, are constantly being addressed to children. 'Go to your father', 'Take this', 'Come here'—as the child is lifted up, or pulled away from some object it must not touch. Until the age of 3–4, when they are walking and talking well, children appear to be indifferent to the presence of other children or indeed of adults other than their parents and members of their own family. I have watched two infants of 2–2½ years old, both walking, remain for over an hour within a few feet of each other without showing the least interest in each other. By the age of 3½–4 the Tale infant has emerged from this stage of egocentricity (as Piaget has termed it).[1] It will now run to join another child of this age or older, and likes to play with younger infants. It has now also become sensitive to public opinion to a degree not far short of an adult, and therefore capable of adjustment to others, as the following incident illustrates: I was chatting with Ɔmara and a few other adult members of his house when his little daughter Sampana, aged about 3½ years, who knew me as a familiar and friendly visitor, ran out to see me. 'Give me some money,' she asked; and her manner, intonation, and posture were so like those of the grown-up women who often half-playfully asked me for money, that the whole company burst spontaneously into loud laughter. Sampana, obviously taken aback, turned tail and fled indoors where we found her sobbing with chagrin. 'She is ashamed at our laughter,' said Ɔmara, still

[1] J. Piaget, *Language and Thought of the Child.*